



ARMCHAIR ADVENTURES

Bonus Episode – Meet The Musician (Flute)

AA theme

Connie: Hi guys, Connie here! Welcome to our bonus episodes, sounds posh eh? In this bonus episode we are going to meet one of the amazing musicians that played on the series. The music in Armchair Adventures is so important. It really helps set your imagination free. I've learnt so much from doing Armchair Adventures and had so much fun, and music is a big part of that. I've still got bags of questions though that I'd love to ask the musicians, so I've asked my friends from the community theatre group who made 'The Showbiz Adventure' in episode 5, to help me out. Over to you. Love you guys.

Music fades

Ensemble: Hello, I'm John,
Hello, I'm Danny,
Hiya, I'm Pam,
Hello, I am Julia,
Hi, I'm Chris,
Hi, I'm Habib,
Hi, I'm Mike,
Hiya, I'm Cole,
Hiya, I'm Anne,
Hi, I'm Katie,
Hi, I'm Sue,
Hello, I'm Nicola...

John: ...and together we're the Johnny Barlow theatre Company.

SFX - Applause

We loved listening to the amazing music in Armchair Adventures so we're dead chuffed to be able to interview the musicians.

So, who've we got first then?....drum roll please...

SFX - Drum roll

Amina: Hi, my name's Amina and I play the flute!

Ensemble: Ooo lovely, I love the flute, flutes are brilliant, this is gonna be good!

Amina: It's a bit rusty, I haven't played it much for about a year! But this is my flute, this is what I do, it's kind of my main job really, I play in orchestras...

Ensemble: Wow, ooo lovely, that's amazing, you lucky thing...

Amina: Don't suppose you wanna hear a bit do you?

Julia: Oh yes please.

Amina: Any special requests?

John: The magic flute....

Katie: How about some jazz?

Nicola: A bit of Beatles or Mozart or Police, 'Message In A Bottle...'

Habib: A bit of rock and roll...

Chris: Can you play 'Clair De Lune?'

Amina: Plays 'Claire De Lune' by Debussy, on the flute.

Nicola: That was amazing!

Katie: It makes you feel relaxed and happy and soothed.

Chris: Well done Amina!

Cole: It sounded so peaceful.

Sue: How did you get into playing? I used to play the piano and the church organ but when I started the violin it sounded like cats squealing!

SFX – screechy violins/cats making noises

How did you get into playing?

Amina: That's an interesting one because I'm not from a musical family, I wasn't surrounded by instruments at home. I was in primary school and I was

probably about 8 or nearly 9 years old and the headmistress came into my classroom and handed me a flute.

Anne: Teachers are so important. A good teacher can make all the difference in the world. When did you decide it was it the instrument for you?

Amina: Basically, when I was younger I just really enjoyed it! It was just really fun playing an instrument and actually what I used to do in the early days was listen to TV theme tunes and try to copy them. I remember the first performance in primary school was me playing the theme tune to 'Dallas' in assembly. I've never forgotten it because it's a great tune, like one of my favourite tunes ever!

Theme to 'Dallas'

Katie: Can you whistle or hum the theme tune to your favourite TV show listener?

SFX - Ding

Nicola: Sounds like your school really got things started for you then?

Amina: Yeh, school was really good because they gave us chances to do end of term concerts, you know at Christmas or at the end of the summer.

Katie: Have you got any tips for any young musicians starting out?

Amina: Ah, that's a great question. For someone starting out I'd say just do it, take a risk, give it a go, and do all of the things that are the most fun. So start out with stuff that you really love, tunes that you really like, to keep you motivated and keep you going. And not to worry about how long it takes to learn something, it doesn't matter. The only person you need to be in competition with is yourself, you don't have to worry about anyone else, just do it for pure enjoyment, that's what I would say.

Ensemble: You've got to enjoy yourself. Confidence is so important. What good advice.

Amina plays the flute

Julia: Where did you get your biggest round of applause?

Amina: At Hyde Park in London, a few years ago as part of the BBC Proms, and I think there was 400,000 people in the audience, but it was televised! So if I, in my head, in my imagination, imagine that 400,000 people plus everyone on TV was giving me a round of applause, that is probably quite a lot of people!!

Ensemble: Wow! Incredible! That's amazing!

Cole: Let's imagine listener that we've all just played in front of four hundred thousand people and we're going to take a big bow. Ready, go!

SFX - DING

SFX - round of applause.

Julia: Oo I've never felt anything like that before.

Amina: I'd love it again!

Habib: Amina, do you change how you play depending on the crowd?

Amina: Yes, I think I must do. For example, if it's a classical concert that I'm doing, there's a certain etiquette involved in that performance and how everybody behaves I suppose in a way. If I do a gig that's a big pop stage thing, then it's different, I still approach it playing the best I can play, but at the same time the music is so different and the crowd and the cheers are so different, and the behaviour is so outward and expressive that actually I end up doing that as well so, you almost get led by the crowd, definitely....great question!

Habib: I know listener, let's all pretend to be sat in a posh concert hall listening to Amina play classical music. Ready, go!

SFX - DING

Amina: Plays extract from Ravel's 'Mother Goose' on the flute.

Amina: So that's how I might play that in a classical situation. Say I was in a slightly 'poppier' thing, I might do it a bit differently!

Katie: Move around as Amina plays in a pop style listener. Ready, go!

SFX - DING

Amina: Plays extract from Ravel's 'Mother Goose' on the flute, this time in a more jazzy/pop style.

Mid-roll ad: Hiya, it's me Rita! We're going to have a little break from making full episodes for a bit. I for one am pooped! It's been non-stop since the pandemic started. Don't worry though, there'll be some bonus material released throughout the summer months and we'll be back with a new

series in the autumn. It's going to be fan-bloomin'-tastic. So please, if you haven't already, subscribe, rate and review. Bye for now, Seeya!

Mike: Amina, what was your role in episode 1 of Armchair Adventures?

Amina: My role in episode 1 of Armchair Adventures was to provide some little flute bits, little motifs that represented a character in that first armchair adventure which, I believe was the bird.

Amina plays some of the bird melodies on the flute

Danny: Do you play a lot of birds?

Amina: Do you know what, I do! The flute is very much known for its ability to mimic birdsong and it happens a lot in all styles of music around the world, and definitely a lot in classical music. It's partly because the flute, it's so easy to play quickly, and fast notes and jump around very quickly and that characterises the mannerisms of a bird very well I think so yes, I do a lot of birds!

Danny: Do you picture the bird when you play the music?

Amina plays some of the bird melodies on the flute

Amina: Yes I do (laughs). Yeh, definitely because if I use my imagination when I'm playing it really really helps the quality of sound come out in the way I intended. So, if I picture this really cute, fluffy bird at the top of a tree doing its thing, imagine the movements of a bird, the little head movements, the sudden flight, everything about those characteristics of the bird will fit in the music really well. So yeh, I do imagine it, and I do think it helps.

Mike: How did you work with the group to compose the music for the bird?

Amina: So basically, we've got this story, this idea, we did a couple of exercises where I improvised some music that was a bit bird like, and people responded in the group by moving their hands up and down and following the shape of the sound that I was doing.

Katie: What does improvise mean?

Nicola: Making up as you go along.

Habib: Changing and responding to things that are happening

John: It means when you make the music up on the spot, without planning it!

Katie: Ooo, that sounds tricky! So, Amina, you made up music on the spot to represent the bird, and while you did the group moved their hands to match the music...can we have a go?

Amina: Yeh, so I'm gonna improvise on my flute. I go could anywhere, in any direction because that's what birds do. So, they might dart upwards, or they might come down, or they might just fly on the wind a little bit or whatever. So, see if you can follow what I'm doing in terms of what I'm playing and you just try and physically follow that with own hand or your arm, and let's see what happens. See if you can follow me, I'll try and catch you out!

Katie: Follow along listener!

SFX - DING

Amina improvises on the flute

Ensemble: That was amazing! That was brilliant! Thanks Amina!

Nicola: That was really really fun, I loved it! It's great, it's like dancing isn't it!

Amina: That was so great, you were so expressive with your hand and your arm. You were going up and you were going down and sideways, but you were also changing the shape of your hand and it just made me think of totally different things, it was really lovely. Well done!

Cole: So how did you then get the group to make the music?

Amina: We did it the other way round where I followed their physical movements. So, one at a time, it was almost like people were conducting me basically, and you know just using their arm, the sort of magic finger, and going up high and going low down and just trying to create a musical story that was representative of this bird. From that came some particular notes, and particular rhythms that really kind of characterised what ended up being the fixed bit of composition.

Katie: What does composition mean?

John: That's the word for a new piece of music that's been made and the people that make a composition are called composers.

Amina: Ooo, nice!

Nicola: Music is so good to describe movement, thanks for sharing that with us Amina. Were there any other bits of music you played to represent the bird?

Amina: So, there was a bit of call and response bit as well in this Armchair Adventure where the flute call was a little motif that invited a response. And it was only a few notes long, 7 notes in fact – I could play it?

Ensemble: Yeh, please! That would be brilliant, I'd love to hear that.

Amina: Plays the bird motif on the flute.

Amina: Very bird like, it's really good. And I think when we tried the call and response exercise with the group what happened was I played a few bird like sounds and the group copied me, but did it with their voices.

Excerpt from episode - flute plays the bird call and ensemble copy with their voices

Amina: There are other little techniques that you can do on the flute which help make it that bit more bird like. For example, trilling is a good one.

Plays a trill on the flute.

We think of the word trilling, like birds trill right, they definitely trill (brrrr). They do that little chirrup and you can do that on the flute too, so what that means is that I play one note but then I waggle my finger to the note above and it makes a trilling sound.

Plays more trills on the flute.

So there's something about that trill that's a bit like, for me, the wings going up and down. So it's almost like when a bird is mid-flight in the air but it just kind of stops momentarily, and it's just fluttering it's wings, like very fluttery.

Habib: What piece of music would you recommend our listeners listen to?

Amina: Hmm, gosh, there are so many things that I could recommend, I think based on today and our conversation about Armchair Adventures, I would probably suggest maybe go and listen to Peter & The Wolf by Prokofiev, because that piece of music is all about representing characters, everything we've talked about today, about the emotions and the characterisations of animals and other characters in the piece of music and I think that is a really great one for young people and older people alike as a great piece of music to go and listen to.

Extract from 'Peter & The Wolf' by Prokofiev

Katie: It's been lovely to meet you and thank you very much for joining us.

Nicola: Yeh, thank you for playing for us.

Amina: You're very welcome.

Connie: That was great. I learnt so much. Thanks for your help everyone and thanks to you too listener. Love you guys.

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